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ABSTRACT

Forensic directors (n=102) affiliated with Phi Delta Kappa responded to a survey to determine perceptions regarding participation of host school students in their respective forensics tournaments. When asked whether they permitted host school students to compete in their respective tournaments, 56% indicated that they did, but 75% of those had conditions attached, such as not being permitted to advance to eliminations, or being permitted only to fill in schedule or increase national qualifying opportunities. When asked to rank order their respective value objections to having a host school's students compete in a tournament, the respondents' objections came under five major categories: (1) fairness to others, (2) graciousness, (3) tournament integrity, (4) educational experience, and (5) managerial difficulties. Most pronounced was the perceived potential for bias among judges. (Suggested guidelines for directors electing to have host school students compete in a tournament are included.) (HTH)

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Competing in Host School Tournaments

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Abstract

This study was designed to collect information on the perceptions surrounding participation of host school students in their respective tournaments. The survey sent to 230 forensic directors with a Pi Kappa Delta affiliation, had a response rate of 44 percent. The study revealed that forensic coaches voiced five major value objections to host school students competing in their respective tournament: fairness to others, graciousness, tournament integrity, educational experience, and managerial difficulties. Most pronounced was the perceived potential for judge bias.

Competing in Host School Tournaments

The decision to host or not host a tournament is a decision faced by most forensic program directors every academic year. Frequently, the decision is influenced by the past tradition of the school, the perceived need for a tournament in the local area, and past participation in one's tournament. Should a forensic director choose to host a tournament, one pervasive issue becomes whether the host school students should compete in the tournament. In an attempt to get a better sense of the forensic community's thinking on this issue, a survey was administered to a sample group of forensic directors. The results of that survey are reported below along with some suggested guidelines for the administration of a tournament.

A survey was mailed to 230 forensic directors with a Pi Kappa Delta affiliation in the fall of 1985. Responses to surveys were returned by 102 forensic directors, representing a 44 percent response rate. Among the schools responding to the survey, 76 schools indicated that they hosted one or more college tournaments each year; twenty schools indicated that they hosted no college tournament; and six schools gave no indication of whether their school hosted a college tournament.

Forensic directors were asked to indicate whether they permitted host school students to compete in their respective tournaments. Seventy-three percent (56) of the schools hosting a college tournament indicated that they permitted host school students to compete in the host school tournament. However, conditions attached to the participation of host school students were voiced by many tournament directors. The survey data indicated a variety of restrictions voiced

by three-fourths of the fifty-six directors who permitted their students to enter their respective tournaments. The principal restrictions included:

1.	Permitted competition to fill in schedule or increase national qualifying opportunities.	25%
2.	Not permitted to advance to elimination rounds.	18%
3.	Not permitted to enter if working tabulation.	18%
4.	Not permitted to receive an individual award.	16%
5.	Permitted only if a qualifying tournament for nationals.	9%
6.	Permitted to enter but school was ineligible for sweepstakes.	9%

In expressing the conditions affecting participation, tournament directors frequently voiced more than one constraint. The data from the survey suggests that while it is not uncommon for host school students to compete in their respective school's tournament, participation may be restricted or permitted for a variety of reasons.

The survey questionnaire also asked forensic directors to rank order their respective value objections to having a host school's students compete in the tournament. The questionnaire employed an open-ended response as a means of eliciting value objections. Respondent's numerical ordering of value objections was used to identify primacy among listed value objections. In instances where value objection statements reflected compound rather than discrete entities, the first item listed was designated as value objection one and the second entity was designated as value objection two. Respondents registered a total of 139 value objection statements with 72 of those statements reflecting a primary (1st order) value objection of the respondent. Following a procedure similar to Ajzen

and Fishbein's methodology for determining modal salient beliefs (1980, 68-73), modal salient value objections to students competing in host school tournaments were identified.

Five principal categories of value objections emerged from the responses provided by survey participants. The most pronounced value objection to host school students competing in their own tournament was the perceived potential for an unfair advantage to the home school participants. Thirty-five of the seventy-two primary value objections were voiced in this category. The percentage equivalent suggests that 49 percent of the primary objections to competing in one's own tournament are related to the perceived possibility of an unfair advantage to home school participants. When put in the context of the 139 total value objections registered by respondents, 45 percent of all concerns evolve around the concern over perceived home court advantage. Table one identifies frequencies and subsets of value objections in the category of unfair advantage.

Table 1: Concern Over Home School Advantage

Item	Primary Objections	Total Objections
I. Unfair Advantage	35/72	62/139
A. Judge Bias	20/35	32/62
B. Schedule Manipulation	9/35	18/62
C. Knowledge of Extemp/ Impromptu Topics	1/35	5/62
D. Better Rested	2/35	2/62
E. Packing Entry	3/35	5/62

A second major category of value objections centered around the issue of graciousness in hosting a tournament. Seventeen of the seventy-two primary value objection statements reflected some concern

over lack of graciousness in hosting when host school students participated in the tournament. The percentage equivalent suggests that 24 percent of the primary value objections to competing in one's own tournament reflect upon the issue of graciousness. In the context of the whole of the 139 value objections expressed by respondents, 20 percent of all objections were related to the issue of graciousness. Table two identifies frequencies and subsets of value objections in the category of graciousness.

Table 2: Graciousness in Hosting

Item	Primary Objections	Total Objections
I. Lack of Graciousness	17/72	28/139
A. Shouldn't Win Individual Awards	5/17	7/28
B. Shouldn't be in Elimination Rounds	5/17	7/28
C. Shouldn't Win Sweepstakes	4/17	4/28
D. Can't Concentrate on Role as Host	2/17	7/28
E. Host Participation Antagonizes Guests	1/17	3/28

A third major category of value objections emerged in relation to the overall notion of tournament integrity. Fourteen of the seventy-two primary value objection statements voiced concern over some aspect of tournament integrity. When put in perspective of the totality of the 139 value objections, 24 percent of the concern over host school students participating in their own tournament fell in the category of tournament integrity. Table three identifies frequencies and value objection subsets for the category of tournament integrity.

Table 3: Tournament Integrity

Item	Primary Objections	Total Objections
I. Questionable Integrity	14/72	33/139
A. Competitor has Inside Knowledge	6/14	13/33
B. Early Knowledge of Results	0/14	2/33
C. Conflict of Interest/ Exploitation	7/14	12/33
D. Manager Objectivity Lost	0/14	2/33
E. Host Not Paying Fees	1/14	4/33

A fourth category of primary value objections, although of lesser expressed significance that the other categories, involved the issue of a diminished educational experience for the host school student. Two of the seventy-two primary value objection statements registered concern over this category. In the context of the whole of the 139 value objections, slightly over 4 percent of the concern expressed over students competing in their home school tournament fell into the concern for the educational experience afforded the host school student. Table four identifies the frequencies and subset value objections for the category of educational experience.

Table 4: Educational Experience

Item	Primary Objections	Total Objections
I. Diminished Educational Experience	2/72	6/139
A. Doesn't Learn to Manage	2/2	3/6
B. Deprived of Coaching Advice	0/2	3/6

A fifth category of primary value objections dealt with perceived managerial difficulties for the tournament director. While concern

over this issue was somewhat minimal, four of the seventy-two primary value objections did emerge in this category. In the context of the whole, 13 of the 139 value objections were registered in this category. Table five identifies frequencies and value objections subsets for the category of tournament management.

Table 5: Managerial Difficulties

Item	Primary Objections	Total Objections
I. Managerial Problems	4/72	13/139
A. Students Needed to Run Tournament	2/4	9/13
B. Use in Preliminary Not in Elimination	0/4	1/13
C. Increases Need for Judges	0/4	1/13
D. Difficult to Assign Judges	2/4	2/13

Overall, five major categories of value objections were registered by survey respondents to students competing in home school tournaments: fairness, graciousness, tournament integrity, educational experience, and managerial difficulties. The value objection which seemed to be of greatest concern was potential bias of host school judging.

Suggested Guidelines for Tournament Hosts

If a particular tournament director elects to have host school students compete in the tournament, several guidelines might be followed in the administration of the tournament. Caution should be taken to ensure that host school judging (faculty, local hired judges,

and former team members) of local school participants does not represent biased treatment of guest participants. While it may be impossible to completely avoid host school judging of host school participants, efforts should be made to minimize that occurrence especially in final round panels.

To create and maintain a better sense of managerial integrity, the host school should probably utilize an invited coach colleague(s) to help administer tab room activity. Guest tabulation staff may help minimize the sense that manipulation of tournament results are occurring behind closed doors.

If the school lacks an adequate faculty staff to administer a tournament and must make use of undergraduate team members to assist in the administration of the tournament, the school ought to assign students to tasks that do not put the student in a situation which may compromise the integrity of the tournament. The tournament director must assume responsibility for the proper training and supervision of student helpers. Students who are involved in running the tournament should not compete.

Additionally, if host school students are participating in the tournament, the host school should pay fees like all the rest of the tournament participants. Failure to assess fees of one's self exploits the guest schools by letting them foot the bill for host school participation.

While the issue of accepting awards is a matter of graciousness, host schools should not devalue the achievements of their own participants if they choose to let them compete. This issue has been complicated as of late because most invitational tournaments are now

being used for potential qualification purposes for national tournaments. If the student is going to compete, it is a lot less complicated to also let them receive any award they might earn in the tournament. If such a practice is found offensive by other schools, the schools may elect not to return to that tournament in subsequent years. Since sweepstakes recognition does not factor into qualifying for nationals, host schools may decide that not competing for sweepstakes may represent a gesture of graciousness on their part.

Philosophically, this researcher finds no particular problems associated with having host school students participate in their own school's tournament. The tournament, if viewed as a learning laboratory, should be made available to local students as well as others. The element of competitive interaction also connected with tournament participation necessitates, however, that the tournament director also take all necessary steps to ensure that the tournament is administered in a manner which is fair to all contestants. If the tournament director cannot conduct a fair tournament, then the director should forego the prospect of hosting a tournament. The value objections expressed by respondents in the survey represent viable concerns and should be addressed by all tournament directors.

Tournament directors needing more explicit guidelines for administering a tournament are encouraged to read materials available in forensic books authored by Faules, Rieke and Rhodes; Swanson and Zeuschner; and Goodnight and Zarefsky. Each of those textbooks offer excellent suggestions on how to manage a tournament effectively and ethically.

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